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Mrs Helen Dunham
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Dear Mrs Dunham

Short inspection of Stainton CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 22 February 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in March 2014.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

Following the last inspection, leaders were asked to accelerate pupils' progress further, especially in writing. In most subject areas, pupils make good progress from their varied starting points. This is because you have put in place a range of training opportunities for staff, including working closely with other schools and professionals to develop teachers' knowledge and skills. Your enthusiastic team works collaboratively and staff support each other well. As a result of changes that you have made, standards in mathematics and reading are rising. This is because teachers carefully plan activities to match pupils' abilities. However, leaders' actions to accelerate pupils' progress in writing have not been effective. The information that you shared with me indicates that pupils' rates of progress in writing continue to be variable across year groups. This is because leaders have not developed a consistent approach to the teaching of writing across the school. I found that teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to plan, draft and evaluate their writing. In most classes, teachers do not plan work which develops pupils' writing skills across other areas of the curriculum, such as history and geography. Leaders' monitoring of pupils' work has not focused on how pupils are developing their writing skills.

In areas other than writing, leaders have been successful in raising pupils' achievements. Since the last inspection, you have improved the system that you use

to track pupils' progress. You set challenging targets for pupils and measure their progress towards these. Where pupils are falling behind in their progress, you put in place additional support for their learning. These actions have improved pupils' learning in mathematics and reading.

Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities receive very carefully planned provision, which precisely matches their needs. This is because leaders are meticulous in checking for gaps in pupils' learning. As a result of leaders' actions, these pupils make good progress from their varied starting points.

You have also improved communication with parents and carers since the last inspection. The parents that I spoke to welcomed the availability of teachers at the start and end of each day. As one parent commented, 'Issues are dealt with very quickly.' Leaders use parents' evenings, end of year reports, newsletters and information evenings to inform parents about pupils' learning. The majority of parents agree that communication is good and that the school gives them useful information about their child's progress.

Governors provide a good balance of support and challenge for leaders. They have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. This is because they visit the school often and keep up to date with training. Governors share leaders' aspirations to improve pupils' achievements in writing. They are taking the appropriate steps to make sure that the school's website is up to date.

Pupils enjoy coming to school, and their attendance is good. Those pupils who spoke to me during the inspection said that bullying does not happen and that teachers deal effectively with any misbehaviour. Pupils described how the staff teach them about other cultures and that they should value everyone equally. They were, however, unsure about what fundamental British values are. Pupils told me that lessons are fun and they enjoy attending clubs such as singing, netball and running. They are proud of their high-quality artwork, which enhances the school environment. Pupils relish the leadership opportunities that you give them, such as showing visitors around school and leading assemblies on healthy eating.

The majority of parents share pupils' positive view of the school and agree that the school is well led and managed. Those who spoke to me at the start of the day or who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online parent questionnaire, said that the staff look after pupils well. These comments were typified by 'Dedicated teachers go above and beyond in terms of their care.' Parents of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities were keen to tell me how they appreciate the additional support that their children receive.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have made sure that safeguarding arrangements are thorough and fit for purpose. You carry out all the necessary checks on the suitability of staff to work with children. Staff teach pupils how to keep themselves safe both online and in the

wider community.

Through regular training, staff and governors have an up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding. Staff know exactly what actions to take when there are any concerns about a pupil. Records relating to pupils' welfare are well kept and of high quality. Leaders share information with parents and the appropriate authorities effectively to ensure pupils' safety. Teachers, parents and staff agree that pupils are safe in school.

Inspection findings

- The inspection focused on a number of key lines of enquiry, the first of which was how well children achieve in the Reception Year. I found that teachers plan engaging activities, which match the development needs and interests of children. When I visited, teachers had planned a range of activities to celebrate Chinese New Year. Children were having fun using chopsticks to pick up pompoms and feathers. Other children were excitedly folding and sticking card to make dragons. Children play cooperatively and with concentration. I found that, from their starting points, children make good progress through the early years and they are well prepared for Year 1. Leaders have correctly identified that teachers could provide more opportunities for children to develop their early writing skills in the outdoor learning area.
- For my second focus, I looked at the achievement of pupils in key stage 1 in reading. This was because, in 2017, their attainment was below the national average and below that of previous years. Teachers make sure that pupils quickly acquire early reading skills and become confident readers. Adults listen to pupils read very regularly and develop pupils' understanding of what they are reading. By the end of key stage 1, pupils read with fluency and enjoyment. I found that pupils in key stage 1 make good progress in reading from their varied starting points.
- I also looked at how well pupils achieve in mathematics. I found that the quality of teaching in mathematics has improved since the last inspection. This is because of steps that leaders have taken to improve teachers' subject knowledge and teaching strategies. You have made sure that teachers and support staff have received training and support to improve their skills and confidence when teaching mathematics. As a result of skilful teaching, pupils develop a secure understanding of number and are confident and accurate in their written calculations. Teachers use questioning very precisely to develop pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills. Current pupils are making good progress in mathematics.
- The school's website is informative and easy to navigate. It provides a useful source of information for parents. However, at the start of the inspection, the website was not up to date in one area. There was no information published on the impact of pupil premium spending last year.
- During my inspection, I found that you teach pupils to respect people from a range of different backgrounds. Pupils learn about other religions and to value diversity. However, the pupils that I spoke to are not aware of the full range of

fundamental British values, such as the rule of law, individual liberty and democracy.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers plan activities in the early years outdoor area which develop children's writing skills
- a consistent approach to writing is developed across the school so that pupils make good or better progress
- the website is compliant and is effectively monitored to ensure that it remains so
- the curriculum develops pupils' understanding of British values.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Carlisle, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Cumbria. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Stevens
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you and your leadership team. I also met with four governors, including the chair of governors. I met with eight pupils from key stage 2. I visited classes in each key stage with you, where I observed teaching and learning and spoke with pupils. I looked at pupils' work in a range of subject areas. I also heard pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read.

I took account of responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire, including free-text responses. I spoke with parents at the start of the school day. I looked at a range of documentation, including the school's improvement plan, information about pupils' attainment and progress and teachers' performance management monitoring. I also evaluated safeguarding procedures, including policies to keep pupils safe, safeguarding checks and attendance information. I undertook a review of the school's website.